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Literary Selections.

AN UNEXPECTED RACE.

In one of the large towns in Worcester county, Massachusetts, used to live a clergyman, whom we will call Ridewell. He was one of the Baptist pursuasion, and very rigid in his ideas of moral propriety. He had in his employ an old negro named Pompey; and if this latter individual was not so strict in his morals as his master, he was at least a very cunning dog, and passed in the household for a pattern of propriety. Pompey was an useful servant, and the old clergyman never hesitated to trust him with the most important business.

Now it so happend that there were dwelling in and about the town, sundry individuals who had not the fear of the dreadful penalties which Mr. Ridewell preached about before their eyes, for it was the wont of these people to congregate on Sabbath evenings upon a level piece of land in the outskirts of the town, with their race horses. The spot was hidden from view by a dense piece of woods, and for a long while the Sunday evening races were carried on without detection by the officers, or others who might have stopped them.

It also happened that the good old clergyman owned one of the best horses in the country. This was one of the old Morgan stock, with a mixture of Arabian blood in his veins, and it was generally known that few beasts could pass him on the road. Mr. Ridewell, with a dignity, becoming his calling, stoutly declared that the fleetness of his beast never afforded him any gratification, and that, for his part he would as lief have any other. Yet money could not buy his Morgan, nor could any amount of argument pursuade him to swop.

The church was so near the good clergyman's dwelling that he always walked to meeting, and his horse was consequently allowed to run in the pasture.

Pompey heard that these races were on the tapis and he resolved to enter his master's horse on his own account, for he feld assured that Morgan could beat anything in the shape of horse-flesh that could be produced in that quarter. So on the very next Sunday evening he hid the bridle under his jacket, and went out into the pasture and caught the horse and rode off towards the spot where the wicked ones were congregated. Here he found some dozen assembled, and the race was about to commence. Pompey mounted his beast, and at the signal he started. Old Morgan entered into the spirit of the thing, and came out two rods ahead of everything. So Pompey won quite a pile, and before dark he was initiated into horse racing.

Pompey succeeded in getting home without exciting any suspicions and now he longed for the Sabbath afternoon to come, for he determined to try it again. He did go again, and again he won; and this course of wickedness he follo wed up for two months, making his appearance upon the race ground every Sunday afternoon as soon as he could after "meeting was out." And during that time Pompey was not the only one that loved racing. No, for old Morgan himself had come to love the excitement of the thing, too, and his every motion when upon the track, showed how zealously he entered into the spirit of the game.

But these things were not always to remain secret. One Sunday a pious deacon beheld this racing from a distance and he straightway went to the parson with the alarming intelligence. The Rev. Mr. Ridewell was utterly shocked, his moral feelings outraged, and he resolved to put a stop to this wickedness. During the week he made several inquiries, and he learned that the thing had been practiced all summer on every Sabbath afternoon. He made his parishioners keep quiet, and on the next Sunday he would make his appearance on the very spot and catch them in their deeds of iniquity.

On the following Sabbath, after dinner, Mr. Ridewell ordered Pompey to bring up old Morgan and put him in the stable. The order was obeyed, though not without misgivings on the part of the faithful negro. As soon as the afternoon services were closed, the two deacons, and some other members of the church accompanied the minister home, together with their horses.

'It is the most flagrant piece of abomination that ever came to my knowledge,' said the indignant clergyman as they rode on.

'It is, most assuredly,' answered one of the deacons.

'Horse-racing on the Sabbath!' uttered the minister.

'Dreadful!' echoed the second deacon.

And so the conversation went on until they reached the top of a gentle eminence which overlooked the plain, where the racing was carried on, and where some dozen horsemen, with a score of lookers on had assembled. The sight was one that chilled the good parson to his soul. He remained motionless till he had made out the whole alarming truth, then turning to his companions, said: 'Now, my brothers, let us ride down and confront the wicked wretches, and if they will down on their knees and implore God's mercy, and promise to do so no more, we will not take legal action against them. O, that my own land should be desecrated thus!' for it was indeed a portion of his farm.

As the good clergyman thus spoke he started toward the scene. The horses of the wicked men were drawing up for the start as the minister approached. Some of the riders at once recognized old Morgan, but did recognize the reverend individual who rode him.

'Wicked men!' commenced the parson, as he came near enough for his voice to be heard, children of sin and shame—'

'Come on old hoss,' cried one of the jockies, turning towards the minister, 'if you are in for the first race, you must stir your stumps. Now we go.'

'Alas! O, my wicked—'

'All ready!' shouted he who led the affair, cutting the minister short, 'and off it is!'

And the word for starting was given. Old Morgan knew that word too well, for no sooner did it fall upon his ears than he stuck out his nose, and with one wild snort he started, and the rest of the racers, twelve in number kept him company.

'Who-ho-ho-o!' yelled the clergyman, tugging at the reins with all his might.

But it was of no avail. Old Morgan ahead of all his competitors, and he came up to the judge's stand three rods ahead, where the petrified deacons were standing with eyes and mouth wide open.

'Don't stop,' shouted one of the wicked judges, who now recognized parson Ridewell, and suspected his business, who also saw into the secret of old Morgan's joining the race. 'Don't stop,' he shouted again; 'it's a two-mile heat this time. Keep right on, parson You are good for another mile. Now you go—and off it is.'

Those last words were of course known to the horse, and no sooner did Morgan hear them than he stuck out his nose again, and again started off. The poor parson did his utmost to stop the bewitched animal, but it could not be done. The more he struggled and yelled, the faster the animal went, and ere many moments he was again at the starting point, where Morgan stopped of his own accord. There was a hurried whispering among the wicked ones, and a succession of very curious winks and knowing nods seemed to indicate that they understood the matter.

'Upon my soul, parson,' said the leader of the abomination, approaching the spot where the minister still sat in his saddle, he having not yet sufficiently recovered his presence of mind to dismount, 'you ride well. We had not looked for this honor.'

'Honor, sir!' gasped Ridewell, looking blankly into the speaker's face.

'Aye—for 'tis an honor. You are the first clergyman that aas ever joined us in our Sabbath evening entertainments.'

'I—I, sir! joined you?'

'Ha, ha, ha! you did it well! Your good deacons really think you were trying very hard to hold your horse. but I saw through it; I saw how slyly you put your horse up. But I don't blame you for feeling proud of Morgan, for I should feel so myself if I owned him.—But you need not fear; I will tell all who may ask me about it, that yon did your best to stop the beast; for I would rather stretch the truth a little than have such a jockey as you suffer.'

This had been spoken so loudly that the deacons had heard every word, and the poor parson was bewildered; but he came to himself, and with a flashing eye, he cried:

'Villians! what mean you? Why do—'

'Hold on,' interrupted one of the party, as the rest of the racing men had all mounted their horses; hold on a moment, parson; we are willing to allow you to carry off the palm, but we won't stand your abuse. When we heard that you had determined to try if your horse would not beat us all, we agreed among ourselves that if you came we would let you in. We have done so, and you have won the race in a two-mile heat. Now let that satisfy you. By hokey, you did it well. When you want to try again, just send word, and we'll be ready for you.

As the wretch thus spoke, he turned his horse's head, and before a word could be uttered by the astonished preacher, the whole party had ridden away out of hearing. It was sometime before one of the churchman should speak. They knew not what to say. Why should their minister's horse have joined in the race without some permission from his master?—They knew how he set by the animal, and at length they shook their heads in doubt.

'Its very strange,' said one.

'Very,' answered the second.

'Remarkable,' suggested the third.

'On my soul, brethren,' spoke Ridewell, I can't make it out.

The brethren looked at each other, and the deacons shook their heads in a very solemn manner.

So the party rode back to the clergyman's house, but none of the brethren would enter, nor would they stop at all. Before Monday had drawn to a close, it was generally known that parson Ridewell raced his horse on the Sabbath, and a meeting of the church was appointed for Thursday.

Poor Ridewell was almost crazy with vexation; but before Thursday came, Pompey found out how matters stood, and he assured his master that he coeld clear the matter up; and after a day's search he discovered the astounding fact that some of those wicked men had been in the habit of stealing old Morgan from the pasture and racing him on Sabbath afternoons! Pompey found out all this—but he could not find out who did it.

As soon as this became known to the church, the members conferred together, and they soon concluded that under such circumstances a big mettled horse would be apt to run away with his rider when he found himself directly upon the track.

So parson Ridewell was cleared, but it was a long while before he got over the blow, for many were the wicked wags who delighted to hector him by offering to ride a race with him, or to bet on his head, or to put him against the world on a race. But Ridewell grew older, his heart grew warmer, and finally he could laugh with right good will when he spoke of his unexpected race.

Be sure there was no more Sabbath racing in that town.

REVERSES OF FORTUNE.

There is no country in the world where men meet with frequent reverses of fortune as in this. So many are venturing upon the sea of trade, navigators, with scarcely the skill of a cabin boy, that shipwrecks become the rule and not the exception. Hundreds are yearly engulphed, and we see them no more on the troubled waters. But there are a few strong-spirited, hopeful, brave men, who with vigorous arms, struggle to the shore, and wiser by misfortune, try the ocean again, on sounder vessels, and with a more skilful helmsman. These are generally successful in their later enterprises. Some are shipwrecked through weak dismay in the hour of danger; while others, more confident, courageous and self possessed, succeed in reaching port. There are men who give up the first failure; there are others whom no reverse or disappointment can discourage. You see them fail to-day but to-morrow they are on their feet again, as hopeful and as vigorous as ever. To these the world is always debtor.

When a crisis befalls you, and emergency requires moral courage and noble manhood to meet it, be equal to the requirements of the moment, and superior to the obstacles in your path. The universal testimony of men whose experience exactly coincides with yours, furnishes the consoling reflection that difficulties may be ended by opposition.—There is no blessing equal to the possession of a stout heart. The magnitude of the danger needs nothing more than a greater effort than ever at your hands. If you prove recreant in the hour of trial, you are the worst of recreants, and deserve no compassion. Be not dismayed or unmanned when you should be bold and daring, unflinching and resolute. The cloud whose threatening murmurs you hear with fear and dread, is full of blessings, and the frown whose sternness now makes you shudder, will ere long be succeeded by a smile of bewitching sweetness and dignity. Then be strong and manly oppose equal forces to open difficulties, and trust in Providence. Greatness can only be achieved by those who are tried.

From the Economist.

ENGLAND'S DANGER & DISCREDIT.

This war may prove a signal blessing or a heavy curse to England according as we may neglect or use the occasion and the warning it has given. It is a critical moment it our fortunes and our history; it may be the commencement of our decline, or the event from which to date our rescue and our rise. It may open our eyes, or it may seal our fate.—If we read its lesons and profit by its opportunity—and the lessons are as plain as the opportunity is golden—our children and our children's children will be eternally grateful to the shock which has roused us from our self-complacent lethargy before faults and tillies had congealed into incurable habits, before rust had irrevocably clogged all the wheels of the machine, before the sagacity to perceive, the manliness to avow, and the energy to rectify our blunders hal entirely died out from the heart of the nation. If our failures, shortcomings, and mortifications shall stir us as they would have stirred our forefathers; shall scatter to the winds our besotted vanity and our long-suffering patience; shall teach us to see our peril without exaggeration and without disguise; shall awaken both the government and the people rudely enough to induce them to apply the needed remedies, however severe those remedies may be, and to break through hampering and paralyzing etiquette, though that etiquette may be the most rigid, ancient, and consecrated folly of the land;—then the day of our danger may be the day of our redemption and our security as well.

But if we wrap ourselves in the blindness of a fatuous pride; if we slumber on in reliance on our insular position, on our ancient fame, or our unquestionable energy, or our vast resources; if we refuse to draw the obvious inferences from our sad calamities, our humiliating rebuffs, and our clumsy victories, and leave those inferences to be drawn by envious rivals and exulting foes; if we alone, of all Europe, are not enlightened by the facts which we ourselves furnish; if we are not yet sufficiently alarmed and startled to declare that such things must go on no longer; if we still are content to blunder and stagger on as we have done, so long as we stumble on something like success at last,—permitting our generals to win victories by lavish bloodshed instead of by skilful strategy, and our statesmen to gain their ends by enormous expenditure instead of by wise foresight and conscientious appointments,— then assuredly we shall have cause to rue the day when by entering the lists with Russia we unveiled our weak points to Europe, while refusing to see them or to remedy them ourselves.

This may sound like exaggerated language to those who dwell in the fool's paradise which islanders, living on patrimonial property and patrimonial fame, so easily make for themselves, but it will be deemed such by no one who is aware of the way in which at this hour England is spoken of throughout the Continent.—Traveling abroad or keeping up foreign correspondence, is no pleasant occupation for Englishmen now. Partly from facts which can neither be contradicted nor concealed, partly from the somewhat extravagant manner in which those facts have been blazoned, colored, and added to by our relentless Press, the impression has spread wide through Europe that the events of this war have exposed the weakness and decline of our country;—and this impression has diffused through nearly all lands an ominous and malignant joy. It is not long since we ourselves conversed with two of the most eminent public men in France,—the one a vehement partisan, the other a consummate statesman. Both considered it as settled that our strength and glory had departed, that our institutions were so rusty and our government so systematically bad as to render our wealth, our courage, and our stubborn vigor of no avail;—but one gloated over the picture with vulgar exultation, while the other deplored it as a grievous blow to the hopes of freedom and civilization. Caricatures and conundrums, *not* of French origin, swarmed in the private circles of Paris, representing our supposed incapacity in every variety of ingenious device. We have now lying before us, too, a letter from a continental politician, *not* a Frenchman nor specially attached to France, in which he says: "I think this war will be little profitable to the power of your country. France has gained, and will gain immensely, by it. God forbid that it should turn to the prejudice of England! A statesman in high office was saying to me last Saturday: 'The best result of this war is, that we now know the weakness of England.'"

Now, we do not for a moment share the feeling which dictated these various remarks, or admit the justice of the inference which our foes have drawn from our positive sufferings and our comparative non-success. Their mistake is to fancy that our "weakness" is inherent and not merely accidental. But if we did not know that we had a sure remedy for all deficiencies, and if we did not believe that as soon as we are angry or alarmed enough we shall apply the remedy, we should draw very nearly the same disgraceful and disheartening conclusion.—Everything depends upon whether we shall be sufficiently aroused, and aroused in time. We have unbounded confidence in the capacities of Englishmen for government and war as for the ingenuities and enterprise of peace—just as we have formed an unbounded estimate of the resources of England; but what is the value of either if the former be not enlisted and well placed in the service of the country, or if the latter be not called forth and committed to able hands? We can neither conquer nor defend ourselves by *latent* strength or means—by grand possibilities of power. England yields to no nation in the deep intellect or daring and scietific energy of her sons; but what avail are these for winning triumphs in the domain of sacred learning or military enterprise, if we persist in sending our stupid sons into the Church and our vagabond sons into the Army? We have youths of competent ability in the Queen's service; but how can we expect that ability to bear fruit, if we pass it through no fit professional training? We have captains of genius and subalterns of long experience in our regiments; but how can we expect our troops to be well led if we never place these men in positions of command? In short, we cannot deny that throughout this war we have made many unfortunate and damaging displays, which friendly and hostile observers are not far wrong in ascribing to incompetency: and we cannot wonder that this incompetency should be set down as national and not as individual, and that foreigners should be unaware how easily that operation of our institutions and habits, by which incompetency has found its way into positions where its power for mischief is so fearful, can be rectified by a simple expression of earnest and indignant feeling on the part of the people.

But be this as it may, the truth remains, that a very general impression as to the weakness and clumsiness of England is spreading over Europe—an impression that the day of her supremacy is gone by, and that henceforth she is no longer to be feared. Now, it is quite certain that, however erroneous this impression may be, it is one which we cannot without great danger allow to become settled and confirmed. And it is nearly equally certain that, unless we bestir ourselves, it *will* be confirmed, and moreover will not be altogether *as* erroneous as we, in our self-confidence, are disposed to consider it. We have spoken these unwelcome sentiments thus plainly and uncompromisingly, because we dread more than we can say the termination of the war with this impression uneffaced, and with the circumstances which have given rise to it, and which to a great extent justify it, still uncorrected. We do not hesitate to declare that in order to undeceive other nations as to our real power, as well as *in order to make that power real and enduring*—in order to recover and to deserve our old prestige in the world's eyes—a thorough, searching, unsparing reform is needed in every part of our army administration; in the appointment of our commanders, in the discipline of our soldiers, in the supply and equipment of our troops; and who that knows our countrymen dare indulge in any sanguine hopes that any such reform will be enforced and carried out, unless under the pressure of recent alarm, disaster, and disgust? The first gun fired to celebrate the return of peace would be the certain signal for relapse into apathy, confidence, old routine, fatal and antiquated error.—We should forget our warning and go to sleep till the next convulsion.

Great administrative reforms in this country—especially when such reforms involve a rude shock to native habits or to the ideas and privileges of the great and noble—never are and never can be inaugurated and achieved except under an imperious and persistent "pressure from without." This only can rouse the *routiniers* from their inveterate customs; this only can overcome the active opposition of anti-reformers, or baffle the mischievous inertia of ill-disposed subordinates; this only can give to the really zealous and right-minded ct [illegible] Ministers power and authority sufficient to break through the etiquette of centuries, to deny all claims founded on *mere* rank and connection, and to make the interests of the country override all considerations of the age, precedent, and parliamentary influence. "Pressure from without" is needed alike to stimulate the sluggish, to intimidate the jobbers, and to strengthen the hands of the patriotic and resolute. Without it the most sincere and earnest of the Administrative Reformers would be powerless to effect permanent or extensive good. And who among us does not know how slender is the chance that peremptory or continuous pressure from without would be exercised six months after the preliminaries of peace were signed? Let the country, therefore, rouse itself and rouse the government to the common work before them. A time of war is in some respects a bad time for the reform and reorganization of the instrument of war,—but unluckily it is the only time our national infirmities allow us. With us, it is now or never.

From Life Illustrated.

GLIMPSES OF IOWA.

Owen, in his Geological Report to Congress, speaks in the most enthusiastic terms of the scenery of Iowa. It is his opinion, as we find it quoted in "Iowa as It Is," that the far-famed and classic Rhine can present nothing which in its natural features surpasses some of the river scenery of the West. He says:

"'We have the luxuriant sward, clothing the hill-slope even down to the water's edge. We have the steep cliff shooting up through its natural escapements. We have the stream, clear as crystal, now quiet, and smooth, and glassy, then ruffled by a temporary rapid; or whence a terrace of rock abruptly crosses it, broken up into a small, romantic cascade. We have clumps of trees, disposed with an effect that might baffle the landscape gardener; now crowning the grassy height, now dotting the green slope with partial and isolated shade. From the hill-tops, the intervening valleys wear the aspect of cultivated meadows and rich pasture-grounds, irrigated by frequent rivulets, that went their way through fields of wild hay fringed with flourishing willows.—Here and there, occupying its nook on the bank of the stream, at some favorable spot, occurs the solitary wigwam, with its scanty appurtenances. On the summit-level spreads the wide praire, decked with flowers of the gayest hue; its long, undulating waves stretching away till sky and meadow mingle in the distent horizon. The whole combination suggests the idea, not of an aboriginal wilderness (so recently), inhabited by savage tribes, but of a country lately under a high state of cultivation, and suddenly deserted by its inhabitants—their dwellings, indeed, gone, but the castle-homes of their chieftains only partially destroyed, and showing, in ruins, on the rocky summits around. This latter feature, especially, aids the delusion; for the peculiar aspect of the exposed limestone, and its manner of weathering, cause it to assume a semblance somewhat fantastic, indeed, but yet wonderfully close and faithful to the dilapidated wall, with its crowning parapet, and its projecting buttresses, and its flanking towers, and even the lesser details that mark the fortress of the olden time..'"

In a few instances, the hills or bluffs along the Mississippi rise boldly from the water's edge, or push out their steep promontories, so as to change the direction of the river; but more generally, on either bank of the river, we see a series of graceful slopes, swelling and sinking as far as the eye can reach. The Prairie, for the most part extending to the water's edge, renders the scenery truly beautiful. Imagine a stream a mile in width, whose waters are as transparent as those of the mountain spring, flowing over beds of rock and gravel; fancy the prarie commencing at the water's edge—a natural meadow of deep-green grass and beautiful and fragrant flowers, rising with a gentle slope for miles, so that, in the vast panorama, thousands of acres are exposed to the eye. The prospect is bounded by a range of low hills, which sometimes approach the river, and again recede, and whose summits, which are seen gently waving along the horizon, form the level of the adjacent country. Sometimes the woodland extends along this river for miles continuously; again it stretches in a wide belt far off into the country, marking the course of some tributary streams; and sometimes in vast groves, several miles in extent, standing alone, like islands in this wilderness of grass and flowers."

☞ When men speak ill of you, live so that nobody will believe them.

JOHN RANDOLPH, OF ROANOKE.

The Washington *Union* some time since contained a hitherto unpublished letter from this distinguished man (we regret that it is without date), addressed to his half-brother, the Hon. Henry St. George Tucker, on the death of his eldest son, a youth of singular promise. It was found among the private papers of the latter, by his son, Judge John Randolph Tucker, of Virginia; and has, by consent of his family, been given to the public. We are sure that we shall gratify our readers with the following extracts.—*Banner of the Cross.*

"Did you ever read Bishop Butler's Analogy? If not, I will send it to you. Have you read THE BOOK? What I say upon this point I not only believe, but I know to be true—that the *Bible*, studied with an humble and contrite heart, never yet failed to do its work, even with those who from idiosyncracy or disordered minds have conceived that they were cut off from its promises of a life to come.

"'Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' This was my only support and stay during years of misery and darkness; and just as I had almost begun to despair, after more than ten years of penitence and prayer, it pleased God to enable me to see the truth, to which until then my eyes had been sealed. To this voucheafement I have made the most ungrateful returns. But I would not give up my slender portion of the price paid for our redemption—yes, my brother, *our* redemption—the ransom of sinners—of all who do not lug their chains, and refuse to come out from the house of boudage:—I say that I would not exchange my little portion in the Son of David for the power and glory of the Parthian or Roman empires, as described by Milton in the temptation of our Lord and Saviour;—not for all with which the Enemy tempted the Saviour of man.

"This is the secret of the change of my spirits, which all who know me must have observed within a few years past.—After years spent in humble and contrite entreaty that the tremendous sacrifice on Mount Calvary might not have been made in vain for me—the chiefest of sinners—it pleased God to speak His peace into my heart—that peace of God which passeth all understanding to them that know it not, and even to them that do. And although I have now, as then, to reproach myself with time misspent, and faculties misemployed; although my condition has on more than one occasion resembled that of him who, having one evil spirit cast out, was taken possession of by seven other spirits more wicked than the first, and the first also; yet I trust that they, too, by the power and mercy of God, may be, if they are not, vanquished.

"The existence of atheism has been denied; but I was an honest one. Hume began and Hobbes finished me. I read Spinoza and all the tribe. Surely I fell by no ignoble hand. And the very man (——) who gave me Hume's 'Essays upon Human Nature' to read, administered 'Beattie upon Truth' as the antidote! Venice treacle against arsenic and the essential oil of bitter almonds—a bread and milk poultice for the bite of the cobra capello!

"Had I remained a successful political leader, I might never have been a Christian. But it pleased God that my pride should be mortified; that by death and desertion I should lose my friends; that * * * *. The death of Tudor finished my humiliation. I had tried all things but the refuge to Christ; and to that, with parental stripes, was I driven.

"Throw Revelation aside, and I can drive any man by irresistible induction to atheism. John Marshall could not resist me. When I say any man, I mean a man capable of logical and consequential reasoning. Deism is the refuge of those that startle at atheism, and can't believe Revelation; and, my— (may God have forgiven us both!) and myself used, with Diderot & Co., to laugh at the deistical bigots who must have milk, not being able to digest meat.

"But enough—and more than enough—I can scarcely guide my pen. I will, however, add that no lukewarm seeker ever became a real Christian: for 'from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;'—a text which I read five hundred times before I had the slightest conception of its true application."

☞ Somebody in Albany is getting up a railroad car of out of wrought iron and gutta percha. Such a car can be jammed but not broken. It may smash up, but it can make no splinters, or lacerate limbs. The idea is a good one.